

The Sable Lorch

—BY—

Ernest Hamelink

(Copyright, 1913, A. C. Hamelink & Co.)

The three detectives were more or less of a piece—gross, coarse, red-faced men whose hands and feet seemed out of all proportion to their size, bulky as it was. Of the three O'Hara, possibly because of familiarity, struck me as the least offensive. But after all it was not the detectives who claimed and held my chief interest, but the shrunken, shadow-like creature they had in charge, whom I recognized instantly as the supposed castaway the Sibylla had picked up that warm October day somewhere east of Nantucket—the slinking figure I had followed through the press of Doyers street almost to my death.

My conjecture was thus in part verified; John Soy and Peter Johnson were the same, and it only remained now to prove that the rest of my guess was as well founded.

Stepping to the door of the reception room, I made brief apology for my detention and bade my two Cathayan visitors join the others.

"I think, Mr. Yip," I observed, "that we have here the Eurasian cook of the Sable Lorch about whom you told me."

I suppose I was foolish enough to fancy that the merchant would at once make the identification I desired. I should have known better. In subtlety we are no match for the ancient race to which Yip Sing belonged, as was evidenced by the absolute impetration of his manner, as, after gazing sharply at John Soy, he turned to me with a visage as blank as the marble wall, and, in a voice without a shade of inflection, said:

"I do not know him. I have never seen him until now."

Had a white man dared to make such denial, I should have laughed in his face. But the dignity of the Oriental, the perfect aplomb of his manner, including an utter absence of all that could be construed as feigning, forbade such rejoinder; yet I knew that he had lied.

"Come, gentlemen," I said, denying myself even the satisfaction of a shoulder shrug, "and we shall decide whether the man upstairs is the villain you claim he is, or—" but I was in no mood to finish the sentence.

The seven of us, crowding into the elevator, were lifted to the floor above, where I preceded the others to the door of what we were wont to call Cameron's bedchamber. There I paused.

"Pardon me just a moment," I begged, with my hand on the knob, "until I see whether everything is ready."

I had instructed Mr. Bryan to have McNish up and dressed, and I wished to make sure that these preparations were completed. But I was hardly prepared for the scene which greeted my entrance.

McNish, clothed in the suit he had worn when I found him, was in the act of closing a drawer of an old-fashioned rosewood secretary which occupied a place against the right wall, beneath one of the medallion windows. And the nurse was nowhere in sight.

Startled by the sound of the opening door, the trespasser half turned, his hands still on the brass drawer-handles; then, at sight of me, he wheeled completely and stood defiant with his back to the antique desk.

"What are you doing there?" I cried, indignantly. "What were you looking for?"

Even before he spoke I saw the look of cunning come into his small, furtive eyes.

"I was looking for some papers of mine, Clyde," he answered, boldly, and his voice was so like Cameron's that, for just a moment, a shuddering uncertainty assailed me. Only the crafty leer weighed for the truth.

"Papers of yours?" I snarled, ignoring his familiar use of my name. "I have the only paper you brought into this house, Donald McNish, and that's evidence enough to put you where you belong. Where's Mr. Bryan?"

But at that moment the nurse, appearing from the adjoining room, answered for himself, and McNish, with a capitally assumed nonchalance, said, smilingly,

"I didn't think you could be so easily imposed upon, Clyde. The letter to Donald McNish was given to me by McNish himself. He wanted me to answer it. It was his last request. He—"

"Silence!" I cried; and then, "Mr. Bryan, get him into that chair before the bureau, facing the door. These people outside must not be kept waiting any longer." With which I turned, and with hand on knob once more, paused until the nurse had rather roughly, but in all haste, dragged his charge across the floor and fairly flung him into the indicated seat.

It was not until after the immediately succeeding occurrences that I learned from O'Hara what had been told to John Soy on his way up town in the taxicab. As I understand it, the other detectives had informed him

that he was being taken to this house so that his chief accuser, who was high unto death, could make an ante-mortem identification. As a matter of fact, of course, the situation was practically the reverse: We desired Soy to identify McNish, and McNish, under stress of the encounter, to admit his own identity. The Eurasian, however, having been thus misinformed, was at a distinct disadvantage. So, when I drew back the door, and he was pushed forward into the room, instead of seeking, he imagined himself sought, and with bowed head and eyes on the floor, stood shrinkingly ill at ease.

To this misunderstanding is probably attributable all that followed. Had Soy known that McNish was regarded, equally with himself, as an aggressor, he might have controlled his outbreak and permitted the law to wreak its tardy justice. But Soy did not know, and the tide of events met sudden change.

It is, indeed, scarcely conceivable, how rapidly it was all enacted. For just a moment the weakened figure stood still, while behind him crowded the rest of us—the three detectives, the two Chinamen and myself.

I saw McNish struggle for an instant to maintain his pose of indifference, and then I saw his cheeks blanch, and his little eyes widen in craven terror as he recognized the shabby, silent thing before him. His lips parted, his bared teeth clicked together, and his hands, like talons, clutched tensely his chair arms.

In that strained moment the room was strangely hushed. I know I scarcely breathed, as nervously intent I watched those two miserable creatures; the one keenly conscious, the other blind to everything save the rug pattern at his feet.

Then, like a flash, Soy stole a glance at his supposed accuser, and I saw him quiver into steel. It was as though an electric bolt had shot through his shrinking frame and limp limbs. He seemed to grow out of himself, to rise inches taller, towering with stiffened neck and lifted head.

To describe with any degree of accuracy what ensued, I cannot. I know only that McNish rose cumbrously to his feet, only to fall back again beneath the pouncing spring of the Eurasian. Then followed a pistol shot, muffled, yet sounding lethally loud against the grim silence of the chamber; and, as with one accord we leaped forward, I saw Soy roll over in a spasm of contortions, and McNish, thus freed from his gripping hold, raise an arm and fire again, with the pistol pressed to his own temple, just as Bryan, who had been nearest to them, bravely made a grab for the weapon.

CHAPTER XXVI.

His Sister Confesses.

The death of McNish was instantaneous. Soy, with a bullet in his abdomen, lingered for three days. During that time Miss Clement became his sister confessor, and so there drifted into our possession a host of facts which otherwise we might never have learned. Strange, uncanny creature that he was, he seemed to repose the utmost confidence in the gray, sweet-faced missionary, and fairly unburdened his sin-charged soul to her. Those of his fellow conspirators that she promised to protect, she protected. Those that he believed to have played him false, she protected likewise. Her religion was one in which personal justice has no dwelling. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," her Lord had admonished, and to him she was content to resign the problem of retribution.

Had I been more familiar with the Cameron town house and the town habits of its master, justice probably would not have been tricked out of having her way with two as lawless wretches as ever infested a community. I should have known then that one of the drawers of that quaint old rosewood secretary was the hiding place of a .38-caliber Colt, and in all likelihood have had it removed before McNish was capable of searching for it. As it was, Mr. Bryan took no little blame upon himself for not having been the first to discover it, though to my mind he could hardly be regarded as recreant in failing to investigate a piece of furniture of so intimate a character.

The notoriety consequent upon the murder and suicide was hideously inordinate. Inspired and stimulated by the sensational press, which did not hesitate to imply what it dared not state openly, the currency of falsehood and misconception at one period came close to being disastrous. As I had foreseen, the resemblance of McNish to Cameron, coupled with the seemingly convincing fact that the tragedy had occurred in the Cameron town house, where the millionaire was supposed to be convalescent, gave excuse for persistent iteration of a rumor that, in order to preserve the fame of a man regarded as above reproach and at the same time to protect the line of securities in which he had been interested, the story of a confusing likeness had been invented.

No paper in the land would have had the temerity to print this as a fact, but again and again—silly and impossible as it must have appeared to all thinking persons—it was promulgated by innuendo and embodied in more or less weakly-worded denials.

As a result Crystal Consolidated suffered. Bonds and stocks alike sloughed fraction after fraction and point after point. And our mouths were necessarily closed upon the truth, since that, if possible, would have been even more damaging; for while we still hoped, we could give no positive assurance that Cameron was yet alive.

Strangely enough, though the whole wretched complication had been raked reportorially with a fine-tooth comb,

the kidnapping from the yacht had not yet been so much as hinted at, but I lived, daily, in mortal dread that it would be brought to light at the next journalistic hand-sweep. Accurate information as to Cameron's present whereabouts was the news now most eagerly sought not alone by the press but by Wall street as well; our failure to supply it—though excused by us on the ground that in his present nervous condition, it was imperatively necessary to keep him sequestered from interviewers—was not unnaturally arousing a suspicion that we did not possess it to supply.

If, under the strain of the tragedy and the brutal publicity which followed upon it, Evelyn Grayson had not eventually succumbed she must have been more than human. Bravely she had borne up against a whelming succession of nerve-wrenching experiences, refusing to entertain fear and fighting valiantly against discouragement, but heart and nerves have their limit of endurance; and when, on the third day, John Soy was gathered to his yellow and white fathers, and a more yellow than white evening journal ventured, more boldly than had been dared hitherto, to make the implication to which I have referred, Evelyn collapsed utterly.

As chance would have it, I myself came upon her, lying white, limp, and unconscious on the library floor, with the paper still loosely held in her right hand. The sound of her fall had carried to me faintly as I neared the closed door, and a misgiving born of intuition rather than of any more definite cause had hastened my steps.

Having lifted her to a couch and rung for her maid I at once set about doing what I could to restore her to consciousness. But her plight was no ordinary momentary faintness. Stubbornly she refused to respond to my efforts, and those of the maid when, after hours it seemed, she came, were equally unavailing.

Alarmed, I called up Dr. Massey, only to learn that he had gone to Boston for a consultation, and that Dr. Thorne, his assistant, was operating at Roosevelt Hospital. For a moment, distressed and anxious, the names of other physicians eluded me. In despair, I opened the Telephone Directory, in hope of a suggestion, and the name of Addison leaped at me from the page. To my infinite relief he was in his office; his electric was at the door, and he would be over at once.

And it was not until ten minutes later, when he came hurriedly into the room, that I remembered. The name, when I saw it, had at once struck me as familiar. I seemed to know, even, that it belonged to a physician of reputed high standing, yet it was only at the instant of his entrance, when his penetrating steel-gray eyes drilled into mine, that I associated it with the man to whom I had gone, not for any ailment, but to learn whether my friend, in spite of his denials, had ever been in China.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

SKIRTS RARE AT BAL MASQUE.

Philadelphia Agog Over The Event of Social Season's Wind-up.

Philadelphia, Feb. 5.—Philadelphia is agog today over the women's costumes worn Monday night at the Bal Masque, the wind-up of the social season. The skirts were much shorter and the blouses much lower than ever before.

Skirts were discarded by nearly all the feminine guests, who wore baggy bloomers or the full trousers of the Orient, while some were attired in regular "knickerbockers." Pierrettes were missing, but there were any number of maids and matrons in Pierot attire and the still more familiar yamaya one-piece garment.

In the ballroom were girls garbed as "Night" and damsels arrayed as "Morning." Every musical comedy and light opera that has made a reputation in the last 12 months had its coterie of imitators.

Miss Gabriela Tilghman was disguised as a Turkish beauty and her blue bloomers were embroidered in red and a red jacket was worn over the lace blouse.

There was even a "grass widow" in the throng, who proved to be Miss Leaneor Winifred Dorrance. The costume was of grass green crepe de chine, fashioned with rather a short skirt slashed to look like blades of grass.

One costume consisted of trousers and a long jacket, while over the head, completely disguising the wearer, was a bright yellow satin scarf.

Another beauty of the Turkish type was Mrs. John P. Hollingsworth. The white satin trousers were gold trimmed.

Mrs. William Coleman Freeman and Miss Susan Lyrah Brice were costumed alike, representing Russian soldiers. Their uniforms were of dark blue cloth with short knickerbockers, over which was worn a belted Russian blouse.

Gaby des Lys was skillfully represented by Mrs. George Fritz Chandler. The costume was held on the shoulders with tiny straps of rhinestones.

Mothers Can Safely Buy

Dr. King's New Discovery and give it to the little ones when ailing and suffering with colds, coughs, throat or lung troubles, teething, nervousness, once used, always used. Mrs. Bruce Crawford, Niagara, Mo., writes: "Dr. King's New Discovery changed our boy from a pale weak sick boy to the picture of health." Always helps. Buy it at Sibert's Drug Store.—Advt.

FEEDING HOGS ON PEANUTS.

C. W. McLendon of Bishopville Has Tried This and Has Found It Profitable.

Bishopville, Feb. 4.—Anything that will take the place of corn as a feed and not only take its place but do the work better and cheaper will tend to conserve the corn crop and will therefore leave the corn crop to go further and hence be equivalent to the making of more corn.

This being taken for granted the experience of C. W. McLendon in planting peanuts as a hog food will be of interest at this time. Mr. McLendon, in addition to what will be set forth below, is also some chicken raiser, as the accounts of awarding of prizes at the poultry show last week will testify.

Mr. McLendon this year planted no cotton on two-horse farm but planted grain exclusively in 14 acres of his corn which was planted in six-foot rows nine inches in the drill and made an average yield of 40 bushels to the acre and one ton of hay to the acre; he planted Spanish peanuts in the middle of the row and about August 15 started pasturing this field for hogs. Starting with 93 has fed no corn since that time up to this writing, with the exception of feeding the hogs selected for killing for about 15 days before killing on corn to make the flesh and lard solid.

He now has on this same field 73 hogs and pigs which are all in fine condition.

It is his opinion that the hay produced by the adding of peanuts vine to the peavine hay makes it much better as a food for cattle and stock. Mr. McLendon made the above corn, peanuts and peavine hay with only 150 pounds of nitrate of soda per acre and no other fertilizer. He has sold off enough meat and corn to show a profit on the field and still has above 73 hogs living and kept in good condition by grazing on this peanut corn patch exclusively, with the larger part of the corn and fodder in his barns.

BRYAN TO SERVE ON COMMITTEE.

Great Commoner Glad to Accept Invitation to Serve on the Reception Committee.

Washington, Feb. 5.—William Jennings Bryan, probably the next secretary of State, is going to give himself a treat at inauguration time. From Miami, Fla., he wrote to Walter W. Vick, secretary of the Inaugural committee, that he will be here with bells on. His letter says: "I am expecting to give myself the pleasure of attending the inauguration, and shall be pleased to serve as a member of the reception committee." Mr. Bryan is said to have been as "tickled" with the appointment to the reception committee as a child with a new toy. He will probably be in the special section of the committee, which is expected to meet the president-elect upon his arrival here the afternoon of March 3.

The Kentucky colonels will be one of the big features of the inaugural parade. Nearly every other resident of Kentucky is a colonel, so a great big delegation is promised. They will join with the Mose Green club of Louisville, Ky., to make the group one of the most picturesque in the pageant.

The names of others to serve with Mr. Bryan will be announced in a day or two.

Would Change Marriage License Law.

Columbia, Feb. 6.—To amend the South Carolina marriage license law to require a certificate from a reputable physician showing that both parties making application for the license are not afflicted with any infectious or contagious disease, is the purpose of a bill introduced in the upper branch of the General Assembly by Senator Patterson, of Barnwell county. The report of the judiciary committee, to which the bill was referred, was made at tonight's session and it is unfavorable.

The Best Cough Medicine.

"I have used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy every since I have been keeping house," says L. C. Hanes, of Marbury, Ala. "I consider it one of the best remedies I ever used. My children have all taken it and it works like a charm. For colds and whooping cough it is excellent." For sale by all dealers.—Advt.

Among those to go from here to the Corn Show Friday were: Messrs. W. B. Burns, Jr., Harry Pitts, S. R. Smoak, W. A. Bryan, E. F. Miller, J. D. Graham, DuBoise Fraser, Marion Myers, Wilton Wallace, David Alexander, B. C. Wallace, and others.

Methodist Minister Recommends Chamberlain's Cough Remedy.

Rev. James A. Lewis, Milaca, Minn., writes: "Chamberlain's Cough Remedy has been a needed and welcome guest in our home for a number of years. I highly recommend it to my fellows as being a medicine worthy of trial in cases of colds, coughs and croup." Give Chamberlain's Cough Remedy a trial and we are confident you will find it very effective and continue to use it as occasion requires for years to come, as many others have done. For sale by all dealers.—Advt.

THE GREAT NEED OF THE FARM.

Menace to Agriculture Is Fact That Country-bred Boys Do Not Stick to Farm Life.

I heard a man say awhile ago that he had made a careful investigation of the men who had achieved success in a large Southern city, and that ninety per cent of them had been bred on farms.

To him it was a matter of pride and gratification, but I will confess frankly that the statement shocked and saddened me. I knew in a general way that our cities were absorbing too many country boys, but the thought that the brains, energy and power of a great city had been achieved at the expense of the farms was startling. In it, I saw one of the main reasons why farming was falling into decay, and farm lands were in alien hands.

We hear and read a vast deal these days about conservation, but to my mind the most vital things in America today is the conservation of our young men on the soil. It is old and trite to say that a nation's prosperity is measured by its agriculture, but it is profoundly true nevertheless.

There are a thousand issues over which our statesmen concern themselves and with which they whip the people into frenzies of political fervor. But they are not striking at the heart and soul of the most vital problem of the day. These questions are largely political, while the greatest economic issue of this century is to create such conditions and to so educate our boys as to make them love, prosper on and stick to ur farms.

When statesmen big enough and broad enough fill our lawmaking halls to sense this fact and seek the remedy, then we shall have a new era.

Here are just a few random facts tending to show our farms have been and are being drained of its best blood. Sixty-six per cent of the tillers of the soil in the United States are non-landowners.

In Georgia only 34 per cent of the farmers own the land which they till; in Alabama and South Carolina 37 per cent, while in other Southern States conditions are as serious. Similar conditions probably prevail nationwide. This farm ownership by those who do not cultivate the land is becoming one of the gravest problems of the day, and I believe much of it is due to the boys leaving the farm for the city. This alien land ownership must be serious when Mississippi finds it expedient to pass a law regulating it.

We must face this problem and find the remedy, unless this movement away from the soil is checked our natural prosperity and greatness is sure to crumble. Agricultural schools, rural delivery, rural telephones, wider and more general dissemination of information on improved farming and now the parcels post are helpful factors and beacon lights along the way, but much more is to be done to accomplish real results.

Much depends on the farmer—father. They must treat their boys right; teach him how to love the farm and let him share in the profits of his toil. The Boys' Corn Clubs have demonstrated very cleverly what they can and will do if offered the right stimulus, the hope of reward. Closer and better community interest and intercourse, accurate knowledge of the soil and the things that best grow on it—all these form part at least, of a general upward movement for the future farmers of this country.

Are we to have conditions here in the South and in the West as one may find them in many of the New England States—miles of abandoned farms and houses vacant and falling into decay? I fear so unless we can check the flow of boys from the farms to the cities. In the South particularly, where the negro farm help is even more pronounced in its tendency to leave the country and congest in the cities, the farmer must learn how to hold his boys, or go to smash.

I am not an alarmist—normally and naturally I am an optimist and believe most men are struggling toward the light and better conditions. But I would be foolish to blind myself to the conditions outlined, and which any observant man may see. Good schools and broader educational advantages will go far as a remedy.

This is a real and great problem of the day as I see it. Unless it is solved we shall inevitably decay and vanish as the most powerful nation on earth.

C. S. Barrett.

Union City, Ga., Feb. 5.

No Need to Stop Work.

When the doctor orders you to stop work it staggers you. I can't, you say. You know you are weak, run down and failing in health day by day, but you must work as long as you can stand. What you need is Electric Bitters to give tone, strength and vigor to your system, to prevent break down and build you up. Don't be weak, sickly or ailing when Electric Bitters will benefit you from the first dose. Thousands bless them for their glorious health and strength. Try them. Every bottle is guaranteed to satisfy. Only 50c at Sibert's Drug Store.—Advt.

GIRLS' DEMONSTRATION WORK.

The Tomato Clubs and Something About their Organization and Work—Help from Agent.

The Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration work of the United States Department of Agriculture would be incomplete unless some work for the girls was inaugurated and organized. When Dr. S. A. Knapp, the founder of the demonstration work, started the active organization of the Boys' Corn Clubs, he said that it would be necessary to start the girls just as soon as the boys' demonstrations had become well advanced. Consequently, in 1910, when the demand had become great enough to indicate sufficient interest, a limited amount of organization was undertaken. Girls' clubs were organized in South Carolina and Virginia. In that year 325 girls were enrolled.

It was decided that one-tenth of an acre would be enough for a good garden, and that the clubs would specialize in the beginning, on tomatoes just as the boys had done with corn. In 1911 more than three thousand girls, representing eight different States, joined the clubs and planted their gardens. Many of them put up more than five hundred quart cans of tomatoes from their crops, besides catsup, pickles, chow-chow, preserves and other products. A few got one thousand cans each and cleared \$100, besides prizes won. In 1912 one girl in South Carolina cleared \$132.67 on one-tenth of an acre of tomatoes.

During the planting and growing season your county agent will give instructions in regard to cold frames, hot beds, transplanting, staking, pruning, and other matters of great interest. During the coming season she will hold instruction meetings and give canning demonstrations in different parts of the county. She will give the girls information in regard to best prices on canning outfits, labels cans, and other supplies. The agent will be glad to do all she can to help club members find good markets for all high-class products which they desire to sell.

The objects of the Girls' Demonstration work are:

1. To stimulate interest and wholesome co-operation among members of the family in the home.
2. To provide some means by which the girls may earn money in the home and at the same time get the education and view point necessary for the ideal farm life.
3. To encourage rural families to provide purer and better food at a lower cost and to utilize the surplus and otherwise waste products of the garden and orchard.
4. To furnish earnest teachers a plan for aiding their pupils and helping their communities.

Each club should adopt the following general regulations and by-laws:

1. Girls joining clubs must be between 10 and 18 years of age. Special classes may be organized for older girls.
2. No girl shall be eligible to receive a prize unless she becomes a member of the club and plants a garden containing one-tenth of an acre.
3. The members of the clubs must agree to study the instructions of the United States Department of Agriculture.
4. Each girl must plan her own crop and do her own work. It will be permissible to hire heavy work done but the time must be charged. Many girls should join these clubs and put forth their best efforts to learn and to become skillful. It is a good thing to know about soil, plants, and nature. Why can't the very flourishing of the plant be made by flourishing them the scientific and intensive methods of bringing a living thing from the earth, as cultural in its effect upon the mind of the girl as the study of Latin and Greek gods is supposed to be on the mind of the classical student?

Are You a Cold Sufferer?

Take Dr. King's New Discovery. The best cough, cold, throat and lung medicine made. Money refunded if it fails to cure you. Do not hesitate—take it at our risk. First dose helps. J. R. Wells, Floydada, Texas, writes: "Dr. King's New Discovery cured my terrible cough and cold. I gained 15 pounds." Buy it at Sibert's Drug Store. Advt.

The Carolina Gamecock remarks editorially that the eugenics section of the recent breeders' association adopted resolutions condemning moonlight. That must meet with the disgust of the university students, especially those sentimentally inclined.—Columbia Record.

Old Age.

Old age as it comes in the orderly process of nature is a beautiful and majestic thing. It stands for experience, knowledge, wisdom, counsel. That is old age as it should be, but old age as it often is means poor digestion, torpid bowels, a sluggish liver and a general feeling of ill health, despondency and misery. This in almost every instance is wholly unnecessary. One of Chamberlain's Tablets taken immediately after supper will improve the digestion, tone up the liver and regulate the bowels. That feeling of despondency will give way to one of hope and good cheer. For sale by all dealers.—Advt.